Fireside Chats

Digital Enlightenment Forum would like to invite you to an online 'Fireside Chat'.

What is this about?

We organize a small-size online meeting, lasting about 1 -1.5 hours, for a number of young and promising researchers including PhD and master's level students to have an informal chat with a senior person from the world of policy, politics, industry or academia. The senior person is the host and she or he will kick-off on a theme (see below). This is then followed by an open discussion. The intention is actually not only to exchange about the theme but also to hear about some of professional life experiences of the host. And perhaps – but without obligation - also to hear what is keeping your mind occupied.

What is the intention?

Digital Enlightenment Forum is an informal community of people committed to the evolution of digitisation in society while respecting human values. We bring together a network of experts and professionals to create and stimulate multi-stakeholder discussions to find solution-focused strategies.

Over the years we have been organising events and undertaking commissioned studies. We had celebrities in our midst such as founder of the World Wide Web Sir Tim Berners-Lee, former European Commissioner Viviane Reding, and Internet visionary Andrew Keen. Often our meetings are held in Brussels and we have a reputation of organising high-quality discussions with policymakers.

We believe that it is important that we can talk to each other, learn from each other, benefit from each other's experiences and networks. Of course, we would like to see you being engaged in Digital Enlightenment Forum but there are no strings attached to taking part in our fireside chats.

What can you get out of it?

We think that in a short meeting like this you will hear interesting insights about a theme that is close to your heart. We also think that you can pick up some practical ideas from the experience of the host in her or his life as a politician, policymaker, academic, entrepreneur, etc. Finally, you will meet online some people who are more or less at the same stage of their professional and academic life as you are, and perhaps you want to continue staying in touch with them. Each fireside chat will have some 6-8 participants, in addition to the host. We will make continued contact possible if you are interested. That's it!

We do hope that you join us! **Simply please respond to this email with yes or no**, or I am interested but cannot attend this time.

You can also respond to mdegreef@27plus.com and cc admin@digitalenlightenment.org.

Upcoming fireside chats

8 March 2021 at 15:00 CET

Patrice Chazerand on **"AI, a bridge too far? In which Pascal makes up for 'Descartes' Error'"**

Director, Global Digital Foundation

Prior to joining DIGITALEUROPE, Patrice Chazerand was the Secretary-General of the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE), the trade body of PC and videogames publishers operating in Europe between 2002 and 2009. In this capacity he has established PEGI, the only pan-European system of harmonised rating of digital content dealing with various topics such as internet content, protection of minors, privacy, freedom of expression and intellectual property; competition law as applied to interactive and user-generated content; Net neutrality, etc.

In 1999, Patrice Chazerand set up the Brussels office of Viacom which he ran as Vice President, European Affairs until 2002. During this tenure with Viacom he dealt with audiovisual content creation and distribution on all platforms, anti-piracy, EU audiovisual issues.

From 1989 to 1995, Patrice Chazerand was Director, Public Affairs, at AT&T France, and subsequently Managing Director from 1995 to 1999. He has extensive knowledge of telecom services and networks: regulation, interconnection, universal service, broadband deployment, next gen networks, etc.

Patrice Chazerand spent the first fifteen years of his career with the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, seven of which were at the Embassy of France in Washington.

"AI, a bridge too far? In which Pascal makes up for 'Descartes' Error'"

In a nutshell, I plan to build upon the challenge of keeping online gaming out of the scope of the AVMS Directive - drawing from personal experience, in keeping with the rules of the 'Fireside Chat' game – with a view to argue that this type of advocacy and subtle interaction with policy makers is too challenging to ever be within AI reach. Come February, I hope that I will be on top of the fine line Pascal intended to draw between 'esprit de géométrie' (accessible to bots) and 'esprit de finesse' (forever off-limits).

17 March 2021, 15:00 CET

Prof. Dr. Ernst Hafen on **Genome meets iPhone – Opportunities and challenges of citizen-controlled personal data cooperatives**

Professor of Systems Genetics, Institute of Molecular Systems Biology, ETH Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland

Ernst Hafen, PhD, is a full professor at the Department of Biology of ETH Zürich. As a biologist he is interested in how the genetic instructions in the genome of an organism specify the basis of its form and function. During 30 years of academic research he studied this question in the fruit fly Drosophila, a genetic model organism. With the decreasing costs of genome sequencing and the offering of direct to consumer genetic analysis by companies (e.g. 23andme) he realized that people could directly contribute to answering to this basic biological question. Moreover, with their genome and other health data they could contribute as citizen scientists to a better understanding of personalized health and medicine. After all, humans, in contrast to flies, can talk to their doctor about their symptoms and collect health relevant data with their smartphones. The main problem, however, is that people give their data away for free and have no control over the use of their personal data.

Genome meets iPhone – Opportunities and challenges of citizen-controlled personal data cooperatives

In this talk we will discuss the ethical, economic and health opportunities and challenges of the current health data ecosystems and how citizens in Europe could counteract the current US model of surveillance capitalism or the Chinese model of state surveillance with a system in which citizens are in control of their personal data in the same way they are in control of their personal finances.

30 March 2021, 15:00 CE(S)T

Prof Dr Jo Pierson on **Artificial Intelligence**

Professor in the Department of Media and Communication Studies at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Jo Pierson, Ph.D., is Full Professor in the Department of Media and Communication Studies at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) in Belgium (Faculty of Social Sciences & Solvay Business School) and Principal Investigator at the research centre SMIT (Studies on Media, Innovation and Technology). In this position, he is in charge of the research unit 'Data, Privacy & Empowerment', in close cooperation with imec. He holds the VUB

Chair in 'Data Protection on the Ground'. His main research expertise is in online platforms, algorithms, data privacy and user innovation. Since 2016 he is elected member of the International Council and member of the Scholarly Review Committee of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR).

Artificial Intelligence

As AI systems increasingly pervade modern society and lead to manifold and diverse consequences, the development of internationally recognized and industry-specific frameworks focusing on legal and ethical principles is crucial. My talk is aimed at (a) understanding how the 7 Key Requirements for Trustworthy AI impact the Media and Technology sector (MTS) and at (b) putting forward guidelines to ensure compliance with the 7 Key Requirements. The talk identifies four application areas of AI MTS, i.e. automating data capture and processing, automating content generation, automating content mediation and automating communication. Subsequently, the 7 Key Requirements are discussed within each of the four identified themes. Ultimately, recommendations are made to ensure that AI development and adoption in Media and Technology sector is compliant with the 7 Key Requirements. Three clusters of recommendations are proposed: (1) addressing data power and positive obligations, (2) empowerment by design and risk assessments and (3) cooperative responsibility and stakeholder engagements. This fits in the broader debate on how to safeguard and promote European public values in technological systems that - due to digital transformation - have become the basis for key sectors in society.

7 April 2021 at 15:00 CE(S)T

Dr.Thanassis Tiropanis on **The centralisation-decentralisation pendulum on the Internet and the Web - research challenges**

Associate Professor, Electronics and Computer Science - Web and Internet Science, University of Southampton

Thanassis is associate professor with the Web and Internet Science Group, Electronics and Computer Science, University of Southampton and is interested in distributed linked data infrastructures, linked data for higher education, social networks and social machines.

Prior to that he was assistant professor with the Athens Information Technology Institute (AIT) in Greece working on Web technologies and e-learning. Prior to AIT, Thanassis was a research fellow with

University College London (UCL) where he worked on network and service management research for telecommunication services.

He holds a PhD in computer science from UCL, and a DipIng in computer engineering and informatics from the University of Patras, Greece.

He is also visiting associate professor at the department of Computer Science at the National University of Singapore and a senior member of IEEE, a chartered IT professional with BCS, a fellow of the Higher Education academy in the UK, a member of the ACM and a member of the Technical Chamber of Greece.

The centralisation-decentralisation pendulum on the Internet and the Web - research challenges

Patterns of transition from centralisation to decentralisation and vice versa have been observed throughout the evolution of the Internet and the Web and they correlate with major shifts in innovation and policy. Technological developments on computer networking, distributed systems, knowledge management and data mining have been key enablers in that process. At the present stage, decentralised data infrastructures have been proposed as an enabler for innovation by letting individuals control access to their data in data sharing ecosystems. Nevertheless, there are technological challenges on security, scalability, and optimisation when processing data on a large, decentralised scale. This fireside chat will discuss those challenges and roadmaps to further explore them. Further, it will discuss the implications of technological affordances and challenges on policymaking.

Date tbc, Prof. Dr. Ulrike Felt on **Trust, Solidarity and Ownership: Why cocreation matters in building successful health data platform**

Head of the Department of Science and Technology Studies, Head of the Research Platform Responsible Research and Innovation in Academic Practice, University of Vienna

Date tbc, Frits Bussemaker on **Business Community Builder & D1G1T4L C0NN3CT0R**

Past fireside chats

11 June and 24 June 2020, 15:00 CET, Prof Dr **George Metakides** on **Digital Sovereignty:** The coronavirus pandemic is accelerated the digitization of all sectors of human activity. This is happening in a geopolitical context that enhances what some call a "digital arms race". It is in such a context that we ask what is the meaning and importance of digital sovereignty for Europe, what is the impact of the aforementioned acceleration of digitization and what are some of the new policies/initiatives that could enable Europe to achieve and sustain digital sovereignty.

As befitting a fireside, it is intended to have a free for all, no holds barred….chat!

President of Digital Enlightenment Forum, Visiting Professor, University of Southampton Born in Thessaloniki, Greece, George Metakides received his Ph.D. in Mathematical Logic from Cornell University in 1971. He pursued an academic career at MIT, Cornell and Rochester University until 1978, when he returned to Greece after being elected to the Chair of Logic at the University of Patras. Since1984 he has held senior positions with responsibility for Research & Development policy, funding and international co-operation in European institutions. He established and headed the department for Basic Research and International Scientific Relations in Information Technologies at the European Commission from 1988 to 1993. He was the Director of the ESPRIT (European Strategic Program for Information Technologies), from 1993 until its completion in 1998, followed by the Information Society Technologies (IST) Program (1998-2002). In 2002 he returned to his professorship at Patras until his retirement in 2012. He has contributed to the establishment of international institutions (including the launch of the World Wide Web consortium in 1993), has received a number of awards and honorary degrees and is a corresponding member of several National Academies. He is currently visiting professor at the University of Southampton, Adjunct Professor at the European University of Cyprus, President of the Digital Enlightenment Forum, and Advisor to several international organizations. He is involved in the analysis of the economic, political and social impact of digitization, related cybersecurity, data protection and regulatory issues and the promotion of international cooperation towards a digital ecosystem respecting shared human values.

26 June 2020, 15:00 CET, **Michal Boni** PhD. on **Digital Rights:** There are many dimensions of the "Digital Rights" problem. Firstly, it is the general accessibility of the Internet, which allow to avoid the threat of being digitally excluded (networks, quality of networks - 5G, rural-urban divide, various territorial divides).

Secondly, it is the threat of being excluded because of the age (generations), gender (still very often phenomenon), skills and competences (digital literacy in the broad sense as a solution).

Thirdly, it is a problem of the equal level playing field of the functioning of all laws and legal systems - offline and online. For instance: anti-discrimination law tools and anti-discrimination law tools in the digital world: algorithms, biases, asymmetry of information - how to tackle those challenges, how to fight with the hate-speech phenomena.

Fourthly, key to understand: how to translate all our rights (key for the "just society") to the digital community, our rights as - citizens, consumers, humans, users of all kind of services, patients in medical e-services (fundamental: who is the owner of the data...).

The question is: if we need to have the special "Digital Rights Charter" or to ensure full respect of all kinds of our rights in all digital areas.

Former Member of European Parliament, former Minister Poland

Minister of Labour and Social Policy in 1991 and a deputy to the Polish Sejm from 1991 to 1993. He was a member of the Cabinet of Poland from 2009 and was Minister of Administration and Digitization from November 2011 to November 2013. He was elected in 2014 and served as a MEP from the Warsaw region until 2019. From 2019 - SWPS University, Warsaw, University for Social Sciences and Humanities, Senior Researcher Associate-Martens Centre, Senator SMEEurope, Advisory Board - Blockchain for Europe

7 October 2020 – 15:00 CET, **Dr Michal Boni** on **Digital Rights**: Dimensions of the Assymetry of Information

We will continue our discussion on Digital Rights, now focusing on the problem of the Assymetry of Information. The more data we are using, the more quality of data management means. People are playing many roles as consumers, workers, creators, prosumers, citizens - in all those positions they have the legally and culturally expressed rights. It is obvious that they should be properly informed not only about their rights, but also have adequate access to key information about the principles governing the data usage - eg. the significance of the "explainability" rule. It is not so clear when it is related to the AI and algorithms functionalities - how the digital rights of the "digital patients" should look like? How the management of consents done by us as clients, patients, citizens, users should look like and be based on what kind of conditions? How the mechanisms of redress should look like - giving to everyone all needed clear and understandable information and offer the transparent procedures? Data based relationship between business, administration, public services providers - and all kind of users is one of the most important phenomena of our world. It requires the new redefined model of the platform functioning based on legal rule, but also on standards and cultural patterns and customs (current European debates on AI, Data Spaces and Digital Services Act).

26 October 2020 – 15:00 CET, **Patrice Chazerand** on **"Of Mice and Men... and our future Digital Industry"**

Director, Global Digital Foundation

Prior to joining DIGITALEUROPE, Patrice Chazerand was the Secretary-General of the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE), the trade body of PC and videogames publishers operating in Europe between 2002 and 2009. In this capacity he has established PEGI, the only pan-European system of harmonised rating of digital content dealing with various topics such as internet content, protection of minors, privacy, freedom of expression and intellectual property; competition law as applied to interactive and user-generated content; Net neutrality, etc.

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"Of Mice and Men... and our future Digital Industry"

The amazing achievements of digital technology and its growing presence at every step of our way have earned it the dubious privilege of being called Big Tech. From the outset, it has been seen as a powerful agent for an easier life in a better society. Lately though, Big Tech has started raising hackles as a result of permissionless, unfettered and uninterrupted intrusiveness in our lives, also due to the potential of the 'attention economy' to crowd humans out of what we do best, i.e. using our brains. This conversation is meant to set the record straight: algorithms, or 'disembodied brains', are no competition to our 'body-minded brains' (Antonio Damasio). It will hopefully rekindle the younger generation's faith that our future lies mostly in their hands, not in the computer mouse – or in microchips for that matter -, even though no one would recommend emulating what Lennie's unchecked endearment would do to mice...

5 November 2020 – 15:00 CET, **Prof Dr Paul Timmers** on **The Life of European Commission policymaker**

Digital Enlightenment Board member, former Director European Commission, Research Associate Oxford

Paul Timmers is research associate at the University of Oxford/Department of Politics and International Relations and adjunct professor at European University Cyprus. He is also Senior Advisor to the European Policy Center, Chief Adviser to the European Institute of Technology/Health, and Supervisory Board member of the eGovernance Academy in Estonia. He is also CEO of iivii BV, which provides policy advice. Paul Timmers is a former Director at the European Commission for Digital Society, Trust & Cybersecurity. He was responsible for policy, legislation and innovation in cybersecurity, e-privacy, digital health and ageing, e-government / e-ID, and smart cities/mobility/energy. He was member of the Cabinet of European Commissioner Liikanen. For several years, he participated in the European Commission's Impact Assessment Board which scrutinizes policy and legislative proposals.

Paul held various academic positions. He was manager in a large ICT company and co-founder of an ICT start-up, holds a PhD in physics from Nijmegen University in the Netherlands, an MBA from Warwick University in the UK, was awarded an EU fellowship at UNC Chapel Hill and completed executive cybersecurity education at Harvard.

26 November 2020 – 16:00 CET, **Dr Elly Plooij-van Gorsel** on **Policymaking and politics in the European Parliament and the founding of the EIF European Internet Forum**

Digital Enlightenment Board member, former Member European Parliament

Dr. Elly Plooij- van Gorsel. After finishing her studies as a cognitive neuropsychologist, she worked 14 years as assistant professor and brain researcher at Leiden University and 8 years in business. From 1994 - 2004, Elly was a Member of the European Parliament and also served a period as Vice-President.

As a scientist and politician, she was involved from the very start in the digitalization of society and concerned about privacy, trust and security for citizens, companies and governmental institutions as well.

In 2000 she was co-founder and first President of the European Internet Forum (EIF). EIF is led and governed by elected Members of the EP from various countries and different political groups to foster an open and inclusive dialogue with digital policy stakeholders to contribute with their work to the development of public policies, economic and societal challenges of the digital revolution.

After leaving the EP, she held various positions as board member and supervisor, as well as advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defense of the Netherlands. Since 2012, she is on behalf of the Dutch Government chairing the Strategic Council, that is responsible for the Governance and further development of the Dutch eID Trust framework for citizens and business.

7 December 2020 at 17:00 CET, **Pierre Levy** on **How to use digital technologies in order to augment human collective intelligence?**

Pierre Lévy devoted his professional life to the understanding of the cultural and cognitive implications of the digital technologies, to promote their best social uses and to study the phenomenon of human collective intelligence. He has advised several governments, companies and cultural institutions on these subjects. He is fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and received several awards and academic distinctions. Pierre Lévy has been professor at several Universities in France and Canada. He is currently co-founder and CEO of Intlekt Inc. a company that develops and sells an ontology editor and a semantic database based on IEML, a constructed language with a computable semantics
Pierre Lévy has authored 13 books that have been translated in more than a dozen languages and are studied in many universities all over the world.
- *Collective Intelligence* was originally published in French by La Découverte in 1994
- *Becoming Virtual w*as originally published in French by La Découverte in 1995
- His last book *The Semantic Sphere. Computation, Cognition and the Information Economy* was published in 2011 by Wiley.

How to use digital technologies in order to augment human collective intelligence?

My whole professional life was oriented by this very question. I discussed it in my teachings in various disciplines and universities, I tried to answer it theoretically in my books and academic papers, I also advised governments and companies on subjects like cyberculture, on line collaborative learning, synergy in public and private research, etc. I would like to emphasize in this fireside chat the entrepreunarial part of my life adventure. I created a company devoted to collaborative knowledge management (using an innovative visualization software) at the beginning of the 1990's in Paris. I am currently founding a start-up to implement a language (IEML) that makes semantics computable and is destined to become the next addressing layer of the Internet!"

27 January 2021 at 15:00 CET, **Dr.Thanassis Tiropanis** on **The centralisation-decentralisation pendulum on the Internet and the Web - research challenges**

Associate Professor, Electronics and Computer Science - Web and Internet Science, University of Southampton

Thanassis is associate professor with the Web and Internet Science Group, Electronics and Computer Science, University of Southampton and is interested in distributed linked data infrastructures, linked data for higher education, social networks and social machines.

Prior to that he was assistant professor with the Athens Information Technology Institute (AIT) in Greece working on Web technologies and e-learning. Prior to AIT, Thanassis was a research fellow with University College London (UCL) where he worked on network and service management research for telecommunication services.

He holds a PhD in computer science from UCL, and a DipIng in computer engineering and informatics from the University of Patras, Greece.

He is also visiting associate professor at the department of Computer Science at the National University of Singapore and a senior member of IEEE, a chartered IT professional with BCS, a fellow of the Higher Education academy in the UK, a member of the ACM and a member of the Technical Chamber of Greece.

The centralisation-decentralisation pendulum on the Internet and the Web - research challenges

Patterns of transition from centralisation to decentralisation and vice versa have been observed throughout the evolution of the Internet and the Web and they correlate with major shifts in innovation and policy. Technological developments on computer networking, distributed systems, knowledge management and data mining have been key enablers in that process. At the present stage, decentralised data infrastructures have been proposed as an enabler for innovation by letting individuals control access to their data in data sharing ecosystems. Nevertheless, there are technological challenges on security, scalability, and optimisation when processing data on a large, decentralised scale. This fireside chat will discuss those challenges and roadmaps to further explore them. Further, it will discuss the implications of technological affordances and challenges on policymaking.

10 February 2021 at 15:00 CET

Edward Jones-Imhotep on **How to think about technology**

Associate Professor and Director, Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology, University of Toronto

Edward Jones-Imhotep is an award-winning historian of science and technology. He received his PhD in History of Science from Harvard University and is Director of the University of Toronto's Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology (IHPST).

He is a co-founder of Toronto's TechnoScience Salon, a public forum for humanities-based discussions about science and technology. He has held visiting positions at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris) and currently holds an ongoing visiting professorship at the University of Paris (Panthéon-Assas). He is also a member of the Executive Council of the Society for the History of Technology and a contributing editor for *Technology's Stories.*

His research has been supported by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the National Science Foundation, the European Science Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, and the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD). His research focuses on social and cultural lives of machines, with a particular focus on their place in the culture, politics, and economics of modern societies.

18 February 2021 – 16:00 CET

Dr Michal Boni on **The data control issue – in the light of the data governance proposal**

Former Member of European Parliament, former Minister Poland

Minister of Labour and Social Policy in 1991 and a deputy to the Polish Sejm from 1991 to 1993. He was a member of the Cabinet of Poland from 2009 and was Minister of Administration and Digitization from November 2011 to November 2013. He was elected in 2014 and served as a MEP from the Warsaw region until

2019. From 2019 - SWPS University, Warsaw, University for Social Sciences and Humanities, Senior Researcher Associate-Martens Centre, Senator SMEEurope, Advisory Board - Blockchain for Europe

THE DATA CONTROL ISSUE -   IN THE LIGHT OF THE DATA GOVERNANCE PROPOSAL

In the current debates on the data there are some crucial dimensions raised very strongly.

Firstly - the possible shift from the concept of data ownership (discussed many years) into the **data control** challenge, with openness for users and their activity focused on managing their own data. It is the problem of deeper understanding of the **consent** decisions and legal framework for using the tool of "consent", which is described in the GDPR.

Secondly - it is the very important context of this shift: the opportunity for data development for many purposes, especially for public purposes. It requires on the one side - using the consent (be aware and informed about all effects) by subjects, but on the other - establishing the schemes, the transparent procedures for the **data sharing**. It is significant for European works on Data Spaces in many areas (there are of course various kinds of data, personal data are the minor among them). But for instance, the goal: to build the European Health Data Space is in the different framework and mode. Similarly, the data used and sent during all processes ensuring the autonomous car safe driving.

Thirdly - what kind of **conditions** are needed for the data control and data sharing models development: related to the regulatory framework and the trust building. How to join the perspective of the strong data protection objective with the needs to create the **data as** a **common good**, used for public purposes. How to protect data, and how make them useful...

These questions and problems could be the initial points for our Fireside Chat discussion.